

**No: 10/86**

**Ref: 1b**

**Aircraft type and registration:** Piper PA-32-260 G-BHGO

**No & Type of engines:** 1 Lycoming O-540-E4B5 piston engine

**Year of Manufacture:** 1978

**Date and time (UTC):** 7 August 1986 at 0917 hrs

**Location:** Exeter Airport

**Type of flight:** Private (pleasure)

**Persons on board:** Crew — 1                      Passengers — None

**Injuries:** Crew — None                      Passengers — N/A

**Nature of damage:** Propeller, nose wheel, main landing gear, flaps, engine mounting, firewall, fuselage floor, stabilator and fuel tanks

**Commander's Licence:** Commercial Pilot's Licence

**Commander's Age:** 34 years

**Commander's Total Flying Experience:** 837 hours (of which 143 were on type)

**Information Source:** Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot reported that the aircraft had reached between 400 feet and 500 feet in the climb after taking-off from runway 26, when the engine lost power, surged and then died completely. He selected the only clear area available after making a distress call opted to fly beneath two sets of power cables surrounding his chosen landing area. The conditions were sufficiently gusty that he considered this to be a safer procedure than to attempt to fly over the cables. The aircraft successfully passed under the cables and touched down beyond a drainage ditch which had become visible. Unfortunately, the pilot had not at first observed a second ditch and the aircraft only had sufficient speed for him to raise the nose as he passed over it. The aircraft sustained considerable damage and eventually came to rest some distance beyond the ditch. The magnetos and master switch were selected off by the pilot about the time of the first touch down and the fuel was selected off as the aircraft passed over the second ditch. There was no fire.

The pilot is understood to have refuelled the aircraft before take-off at Exeter, completely filling the inner tanks. No fuel was added to the outer tanks. Two other aircraft refuelled from the same supply shortly before the PA32 and both operated for a prolonged period afterwards without trouble.

It has been reported that after the accident the left outer and inner tanks were found to be virtually empty, the right inner tank was full, and the right outer tank was empty having been holed in the accident. The outlet pipe from the left inner tank had been severed by the action of the landing gear leg collapsing. The aircraft appeared to be free from defects in the fuel system other than those caused by the impact. After the aircraft was dismantled and returned to its maintenance organisation, the engine was run using an auxiliary fuel supply. It was found to operate correctly.